

## Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

DIA WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 2860

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: SOCIAL JUSTICE PARTY MEMBERS' VIEWS ON GOVERNMENT FORMATION

REF: A) BANGKOK 2697; B) BANGKOK 2324

SUMMARY:

CONVERSATIONS WITH TWO LEADING MEMBERS OF THE SOCIAL JUSTICE PARTY SUGGEST THAT THE CONSERVATIVE PARTIES FEEL THEY STILL HAVE TIME TO FORESTALL THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A DEMOCRAT COALITION. BOTH POLITICIANS SEE SOCIAL ACTION PARTY LEADER KHUKRIT PRAMOT AS THE CONSERVATIVE'S PRIME MINISTER. END SUMMARY.

1. SATHAP SIRIKHAN (SAKON NAKHON), MEMBER OF THE SOCIAL JUSTICE PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER FEBRUARY 18 THAT HIS PARTY WAS WORKING TO PREVENT THE DEMOCRAT PARTY FROM FORMING A GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THE CONSERVATIVE PARTIES WERE TRYING TO GATHER ENOUGH VOTES TO  
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DEFEAT A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE WHEN THE DEMOCRAT PARTY

PRESENTS ITS CABINET AND POLICIES TO THE PARLIAMENT FEBRUARY 27.

2. SATHAP SAID THAT THE CONSERVATIVES FELT THAT THEY COULD NOT MOVE ON THE DEMOCRATS EARLIER BECAUSE THE DEMOCRATS HAD THE LARGEST PARTY IN PARLIAMENT AND HAD TO RECEIVE A CHANCE TO FORM A GOVERNMENT. CONSERVATIVE STRATEGY, THEREFORE, WAS TO MAKE IT OBVIOUS THAT THE DEMOCRATS COULD NOT FORM A GOVERNMENT. IF THE DEMOCRATS FAIL TO WIN THE CONFIDENCE VOTE ON FEBRUARY 27, THE HOUSE SPEAKER WILL ASK SOCIAL JUSTICE, AS THE SECOND LARGEST PARTY, TO FORM A GOVERNMENT.

3. THE GAME PLAN IS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE TO DECLINE IN FAVOR OF THE THAI NATION PARTY WHICH HAS ALREADY MADE ARRANGEMENTS WITH SOCIAL ACTION PARTY LEADER KHUKRIT PRAMOT FOR HIM TO BECOME THE PRIME MINISTER. SATHAP MADE NO BONES THAT KHUKRIT WOULD BE A PUPPET TO THE WISHES OF HIS CONSERVATIVE PARTNERS.

4. PRAMUAN KUNLAMAT (CHUMPHON), MEMBER OF THE SOCIAL JUSTICE PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT, TOLD AN EMBASSY POLITICAL ASSISTANT FEBRUARY 19 THAT HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR THE DEMOCRATS TO WIN THE FEBRUARY 27 VOTE OF CONFIDENCE WHICH ARTICLE 184 OF THE CONSTITUTION REQUIRES. PRAMUAN FELT THAT THE VOTES WHICH NOMINATED SENI WOULD NOT STAY IN THE DEMOCRAT CAMP (NOTE: ESPECIALLY IF THE VOTE IS SECRET). HE SPECIFICALLY CITED THE SOCIALIST UNITED FRONT AS A POSSIBLE DEFECTOR.

5. PRAMUAN SAID THAT IF THE DEMOCRATS FAIL, THE SOCIAL JUSTICE, THAI NATION AND SOCIAL ACTION PARTIES WOULD REVERT TO A PLAN TO FORM A COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH KHUKRIT PRAMOT AS PRIME MINISTER.

6. COMMENT: THE DEMOCRATS ARE APPARENTLY AWARE OF HOW CLOSE THE FEBRUARY 27 VOTE WILL BE. SENI HAS MADE A NUMBER OF STATEMENTS INDICATING A WILLINGNESS TO FORM A COALITION WITH A NUMBER OF PARTNERS, BUT ESPECIALLY WITH THE THAI NATION PARTY. IF THE COALITION DOESN'T COME OFF, THE DEMOCRATS WILL BLAME THAI NATION. THE DEMOCRATS ARE PRO-CONFIDENTIAL

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BABLY PLEASED WITH THE RUMORS MAKING THE ROUNDS OF THE BANGKOK PRESS THAT AMERICAN AND JAPANESE COMPANIES ARE PROVIDING THE FUNDS NECESSARY FOR THAI NATION TO BUY THE VOTES NECESSARY TO DEFEAT THE DEMOCRATS ON FEBRUARY 27. SUCH RUMORS WILL TARNISH A CONSERVATIVE VICTORY IF IT COMES.

7. THE OPTIMISM OF THE SOCIAL JUSTICE PARTY MEMBERS INDICATES HOW FLUID THE COALITION-BUILDING SITUATION IS.

THE CONTENDING CONSERVATIVE AND DEMOCRAT GROUPINGS WITHIN  
THE PARLIAMENT ARE ALMOST SO EQUALLY BALANCED THAT THE  
PARTY LEADERS CAN TAKE NOTHING FOR GRANTED UNTIL THE LAST  
VOTE IS COUNTED THE DAY THE DEMOCRATS PRESENT THEIR CABINET  
TO THE PARLIAMENT.

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